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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original) A method of identifying incoming calls, comprising:
responsive to detecting an incoming call, determining caller identification information associated with the incoming call without allowing an audible indicator of the incoming call to sound;
comparing the caller identification information associated with the incoming call with caller identification information for allowable calling parties;
capturing the caller identification information;
responsive to determining a match between the caller identification information associated with the incoming call and caller identification information for an allowable calling party, allowing the audible indicator of the incoming call to sound; and
retransmitting the caller identification information immediately after allowing the audible indicator of the incoming call to sound.
2. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of determining caller identification information occurs at a customer premises location, and wherein the step of allowing the audible indicator of the incoming call to sound further comprises:
identifying a communications device at a customer equipment premises location within a plurality of communications devices to which the incoming call should be routed; and
passing ring signals associated with the incoming call to the identified communications device.
3. (Original) The method of Claim 2, wherein the step of passing ring signals associated with the incoming call to the identified communications device further comprises:
passing ring signals associated with the incoming call to the identified communications device without passing the ring signals associated with the incoming call to another communications device within the plurality of communications devices.

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4. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
responsive to determining no match between the caller identification information associated with the incoming call and caller identification information for an allowable calling party, passing the incoming call to an answering system without allowing the audible indicator of the incoming call to sound.
5. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
responsive to the identified communications device being lifted off hook after the ring signals are passed to the identified communications device, maintaining a connection of the incoming call to the identified communications device.
6. (Cancelled)
7. (Cancelled)
8. (Cancelled)
9. (Cancelled)
10. (Cancelled)
11. (Cancelled)
12. (Cancelled)
13. (Cancelled)
14. (Cancelled)
15. (Cancelled)
16. (Cancelled)
17. (Cancelled)
18. (Cancelled)
19. (Cancelled)
20. (Currently Amended) A method of identifying incoming calls, comprising:
responsive to detecting an incoming call, determining the presence of caller identification information associated with the incoming call without allowing an audible indicator of the incoming call to sound;

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selecting a default mode when there is not any caller identification information associated with the incoming call, the default mode selectively controlled by a user; and
handling the call in accordance with the selected default mode.

~~22.21.~~ (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 20, wherein the incoming call is received at a customer premises location, and wherein the handling step comprises transmitting the call to a live port.

~~23.22.~~ (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 20, wherein the incoming call is received at a customer premises location over an incoming single line, and wherein the handling step comprises transmitting the call to a handset also at the customer premises location.

~~24.23.~~ (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 20, wherein the handling step comprises transmitting the call to an answering system.

~~25.24.~~ (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 24 ~~23~~, wherein the handling step further includes suppressing transmission of the ring bursts associated with the incoming call.

~~26.25.~~ (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 20, wherein the incoming call is not retransmitted.

~~27.26.~~ (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 20, wherein the default step is controlled by the user.

Please add the following new claim:

28. (New) A method of identifying incoming calls, the method comprising:
determining caller identification information associated with an incoming call;
allowing an audible indicator to sound responsive to the caller identification information being associated with a pre-selected allowable calling party; and
passing the incoming call to an answering system without allowing the audible indicator to sound responsive to the caller identification information not being associated with a preselected calling party.

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29. (New) A method of Claim 27, further comprising receiving the incoming call prior to the step of determining and retransmitting the caller identification information after allowing the audible indicator to sound.

30. (New) A method of Claim 28, further comprising visually indicating to a user of the answering system the presence of the incoming call having been passed to the answering system.

31. (New) A method comprising:

responsive to detecting an incoming call, determining caller identification information associated with the incoming call at a user premises location without allowing an audible indicator of the presence of the incoming call to sound;

identifying a communications device at the user premises location within a plurality of communication devices to which the incoming call should be routed is responsive to determining the permissibility of passing an incoming call;

allowing the audible indicator to sound at the identified communication device; and

maintaining a connection of the incoming call to the identified communication device responsive to the identified communication device being lifted off hook after the audible indicator sounds.